A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE USE OF CONCRETE IN HOUSES

John Mc Guinness

My interest in the history of the use of concrete as a material for the construction of houses comes from a number of directions. First, I had a general interest in history as a subject but developed a more specialist interest in the history of industry and then since I worked in the construction industry in its history. Secondly during the first year of my career I worked on a number of housing estates where the Laing’s Easiform system was used. Later I became involved in projects using the Jespersen precast panel system, both on the erection side and later with the manufacturing of the units. Thirdly I later learnt that my Great Grandfather, John Carrington Sellars had been the first to patent a block making machine and a system of construction using precast blocks.

The patenting by Joseph Aspdin in 1824, of Portland Cement opened the gateway to concrete as we use the term today. Concrete can be defined as being the mixture of one or more graded materials with cement and water.

Prior to the development of concrete and to a limited extent to this day an alternative was to use various earth mixtures, with chalk, straw or dung, to build house walls. Different names were used such as cob, pisé and clay lump. These fell into two distinct methods. 1. To build walls in a series of lifts containing the mixture within temporary timber supports. 2. To cast blocks or lumps and then build a wall sticking the blocks together with liquid mud.

Early users of concrete used these two methods of construction. A number of patents were taken out both for timber moulds for casting concrete blocks and shuttering systems for constructing whole walls in lifts. Prominent were Joseph Tall, Charles Drake and Potter.

The first concrete houses were not reinforced and the first person to use reinforcement is considered to have been Mr Wilkinson who used ex-colliery winding ropes as reinforcement in his house in Newcastle.

While there were many experimental houses built at this time perhaps the two most extensive development were; 1. From 1864 the construction of an estate of 128 houses in Maidenhead built by Mr J D M Pearce and 2. Later in Sway in the New Forest a range of building by Andrew Turton, which included a tower 198ft high.
After John Sellars patented his block making machine in 1875 it appears that the use of concrete blocks, either cast on or off site became more popular. Again, there were a large number of different systems of which perhaps the most famous was the Winget range of machines.

The next major development was by John Brodie the Engineer of the City of Liverpool, who designed and developed a storey high panel system. As an attempt to deal with slum clearance he built an initial block of 12 units in Eldon Street. Apart for a development in Cambridge in 1927, large panel construction would await the development of the tower crane in the 1950s.

John Brodie’s house at Letchworth for the cheap cottages exhibition  
Easiform housing at Leicester

The inter war period saw the development of a vast range of proposed non-traditional systems of house construction. It is recorded that by 1940 no less than 980 systems had been submitted to the government committee of which 290 were looked at in detail and of which only 153 were thought successful with a further 61 considered to be partially so and 56 as failures. I realise that these figures do not add up. Many of these systems involved small man-handleable units. Two successful in situ systems were Laing's Easiform and Wimpey's no-fines. The Easiform system was a cavity wall one cast in 2ft lifts, while Wimpey's was cast in storey high lifts using forms with a wire mesh surface.

The final phase in the late 1960s was the house from the factory phase. Again, a large number of patented systems were offered for construction. Each involved a significant cost in both development and capital cost of factory and plant. This could only be recovered if the supplier was awarded sufficient contracts and ideally to give a steady and constant demand on unit production.
The dream which was probably illusionary was in any event killed by the Ronan point disaster in May 1968.

In conclusion I would leave with two thoughts that arose from the later discussion. First is there such a thing as ‘affordable housing’? Society has set what is considered to be the lowest level of acceptable housing for families etc. Despite the efforts of the industry, government and its research centres this level has been set above that which can be constructed at a cost which can be recovered at a charge which can be afforded by the poorest of our society. It follows then that if society considers that such a minimum must be provided then the poorest must be subsidised by the rest of society. The second thought relates to the ‘ideal’ social housing development. Developments such as Quarry Bank in Leeds and Park Hill in Sheffield and many others, whilst constructed with the aim of providing ideal housing for people removed from slum conditions have proved a disaster. The old back-to-back and enclosed courts which were if not ideal might, perhaps, have proved to be a satisfactory arrangement if they had proper services such as internal toilets and hot water systems provided.

**Editor’s Note:** This is a synopsis of the talk given by John at the BIAG meeting on 19 February and was kindly provided by him. For further reading an article by him titled “Worker’s/Affordable housing for families of the Association for Industrial Archaeology Review (The Journal of the Association for Industrial Archaeology – copy available at BIAG Meetings!)

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**PREFABs – HOUSES AND THE PREFAB MUSEUM**

* Reproduced from the January 2018 issue of “The Bulletin” (The Journal of the TfL Industrial & Social History Group) by kind permission of the Managing Editor. (with infill information from The Bulletin Editor’s visit to the last Moving Museum event - 02 Dec on the Isle of Dogs)

A good-size audience arrived in expectation of something a little different and were not disappointed. Jane Hearne and Elisabeth Blanchet are co-founders of what is now the Mobile Prefab Museum. Both had a fascination with the symbolic kit-built homes, and the strong communities they generated. The focus from an early stage was always on the Excalibur Estate, not far from Catford.

The Council had been in dispute over the Estate’s future since the 1970s, often making summary threats of demolition. The idea of the Museum began in 2002, based on the ‘Living Museum’ concept, working with the resident community through its Tenants Association. Setting up the Museum resulted in undreamed-of interest – 300 people visited it on the first weekend! Their Arts Council grant quickly petered out, but the Museum was now up and running, very popular and the decision was taken to keep it going on a voluntary basis and donations. The Museum expanded into guided tours, increasing its popularity. In the Museum’s first period of opening, they had 5,000 visitors. Clouds of doom followed the clouds of smoke from an arson attack on 23 Oct 2014, for which there have been many suspicions, but no-one has yet been brought to account for it.

The permanent site being lost, the Museum became a conceptual project, operating talks, walks and exhibitions. The map of UK-located prefabs couldn’t be saved from the burnt building, but it was photographed and reproduced, and the fund of current and former residents’ stories grew, leading to a digital archive, and drawing of second breath instead of terminal asthma.

Heritage Lottery Funding was secured to create a moving museum, and as the funding ends, its last public event will be in east London on 02 Dec, after 59 previous presentations (excluding this presentation).

The formal UK process which led to prefabs began with the Burt Committee, a wartime gathering to address the current and expected post-war housing problems. The Committee first sat in Sep 1942, tasked with finding “the best solution”. The key issue, other than lack of housing was that workers with the relevant construction skills were on war duties, factories geared to war material production. No resource was available for a conventional solution – the Burt Committee turned to ‘factory-made homes’, which led to the Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act 1944. This legislation gave local authorities sweeping compulsory purchasing powers and permitted the building of EFMs – Emergency Factory-Made homes. The Act also specified minimum (effectively de facto) dimensions for each home – 635 sq. ft (5.9 sq. m), and that one dimension the design was to not exceed 7’6” to permit road delivery of the sections, that being then the maximum permitted width of conventional vehicles on UK roads.

Churchill allocated a £150m budget for the homes and promised half a million prefabs; ‘only’ 156,623 were built. Inspiration came from homes built in Austria and the USA. The keen to delivering a lot of homes quickly was mass production, using the 1933 Tennessee Valley Authority plan by President Roosevelt as a template – the project required temporary towns for the construction teams. Multiple ideas came together in the UK prefabs – the ‘Frankfurt’ fitted kitchen, adopted by architect Ernst May in 1936 for a social housing project, became the kernel of the prefab,
and the idea of a ‘central services unit’ for the homes was born. Adoption of the central services unit principle meant the kitchen and bathroom had to be back-to-back, and the rest of the design laid out around that.

The aircraft industry had already installed temporary on-site accommodation for factory workers, so there were home-grown examples to see and learn from. A design competition was launched, to come up with a cost-efficient design for a kit-built home. This was not considered a success, and prototypes were built, including a temporary steel-framed bungalow, the ‘Portal House’. Private firms were commissioned to design houses within strict criteria, to be better than the now-familiar military huts. Outcomes were put on public exhibition at the Tate (now Tate Britain) gallery and at Selfridges.

The Ministry of Works took over requisitioned sites for the new housing and did the ground preparation for homes to be erected. The Act gave controls over housing density, garden provision and sizing, estate and general layouts. The homes were mass-manufactured in four sections, capable of standing on slabs, rafts, brick courses – any stable and sustainable base. They were delivered in separate sections and ‘bolted together’ on site, then connected to utilities. The central services unit emerged as a reality – utilities (gas, water, electricity) arrived at each home through one multi-purpose conduit. These quick-build homes also had internal storage fittings, and a home could be ready for shelter if not occupation within forty minutes, although the usual period to complete one was somewhat longer. The lack of home-grown labour to erect these homes was resolved using German and Italian Prisoners of War. Such was the unusual nature of the use of PoWs that it was even reported in German newspapers.

Prefabs sprouted across the UK, the substantial majority built between 1946 and 1948. The biggest single prefab estate was in Liverpool (sadly, no trace remains of it), of 1100 homes. Bigger estates were generally 500 to 1,000 homes – but every prefab had its own garden. Often, the limiting factor was land availability; sites were mostly where enemy action had flattened the previous land-users, homes or manufacturing. The largest concentration of prefabs was in bombed-out inner cities, the worst damage being caused by V1 and V2 rockets. Being prime targets, land beside major rivers and railways was the heaviest attacked, and the growth of replacement homes was often strongest there.

The homecoming disappointments of the First World War were also prominent in politicians’ minds – a second failed ‘land fit for heroes’ was not acceptable. There had to be accommodation ready as servicemen were demobilised, even though government knew that much social change was imminent and was controlling return to civilian life by staggering release from the Armed Forces (the Editor’s late father wasn’t demobbed until 1947), to allow a controlled return to workplaces, and to have new homes ready.

The prefabs, always intended as ‘temporary’, were fabulously well-appointed compared to most pre-war conventional accommodation – heater towel rails, indoor bathrooms and toilets, a small fridge, a cooker, a back-boiler to heat water and the home through hot air distribution systems and fitted cupboards.
Four key prefab types from an overall range of 11 designs were erected in the UK: AIROH [acronym for Aircraft Industries Research On Housing] (54,500 built) – the aircraft industry had been examining housing mass production since 1942, using metal frames of scrap aluminium, to build a complete unit weighing ten tonnes before fitting out by residents, and prefabricated as four bolt-together sections. Vickers manufactured a lot of these homes;

Uniseco (up to a mark III, around 89,000 built) and …

Tarran (around 19,000). Originally costed at £650 each, but more in reality, prices varied by ground preparation, local conditions and quantities, and construction was hampered by continuing scarce resources. More models came on-stream: Universal American (imported, over 8,000), Orilt (many manufacturers, a lot being two-storey ‘permanent’), Phoenix, Swedish Timber (another import, over 5,000; some were also imported from Finland) and Hawksley. Some of the American homes were imported under ‘lend-lease’, all were of different styles but recognisable in a wide family of designs.

The ‘temporary’ homes took a long time to go, as residents loved their new and well-equipped homes – each one had a garden. Preservation orders saved a few but at first it was hard to prevent demolition. Those untouched by redevelopment or heritage listing just continued to be lived in and loved.

The government was responsible for the prefabs for the first ten years of their existence, then control passed to the relevant local authority. Each Council could buy the prefabs from the government for £150 each, mostly with an imposed stipulation that residents could not live in them ‘permanently’. Lack of new public housing, post-war austerity controlling the availability of resources, meant the prefabs stayed up and were occupied much longer than envisaged. Most were well looked-after; they were slowly drawn into ‘townscape’ plans, heritage aspects and refurbishment, often involving re-cladding.

Post-war LCC developed the ‘London Prefab’ in the 1960s, their design heritage from the classic post-war prefab being immediately evident in their cuboid construction. The LCC design was built as a two-section property, to be linked up on site.

The Prefab Museum began a London map of these homes, recording most them in the East End and inner South London, but as the stories and data started flowing, the co-founders began to understand the spread of these properties. They now list 95,000 properties in over 2,700 locations. Residents remain fiercely protective of their homes, and have strong communities, their focal points often being the wish to keep their gardens.

Jane treated us to a selection of views of current and gone prefab estates – some of which were North Woolwich, Eltham, St Paul’s Cray, Gatwick Green (Bishop’s Stortford), Harold Hill, Willesden (Clement Road), Deal, Hastings, Eastbourne, Grimsby, Nottingham, Ellesmere Port, Bristol, Menstrie (Scotland)… They really were everywhere! The Prefab Museum website has a map of all the known so far locations.

The Prefab Museum Project is ending soon, after a countrywide engagement through the Moving Museum. In Birmingham there are 16 prefab conservation plans. Presentations have been made at the Rural Life Centre (Farnham, Surrey; it possesses an Arcon mk V built in 1947), the Chiltern Open Air Museum (has a Universal prefab, made in Rickmansworth), and has held London exhibitions at the Excalibur Estate, the Isle of Dogs and attended the local history event in Lower Clapton (as did the Editor). 

Jane kindly took questions and noted our own reminiscences of prefabs, of which there were surprisingly many – not necessarily of living in them but of being close to them, passing estates while commuting, visiting friends and families living in them.

Parks had special dispensations to have prefabs erected on them, derived from the Act mentioned earlier – Shoreditch Park was a bombed-out grid of streets just off New North Road, converted to prefabs but when permanent accommodation was available, the land was made public space. Mile End Linear Park arose from a similar circumstance. Many prefab sites arose not through loss of homes but of industry.

Prefabs had construction problems right from the start – they outlived their intended design lives. Shortage of labour meant components were left out in open weather and began to deteriorate before they had even been turned into liveable homes. The peculiar phenomenon of ‘aluminium corrosion’ took place – aluminium can’t corrode, but the manufacturing process was imperfect and left trace elements inside the finished metal, which deteriorated in open exposure and weakened the surrounding metal. As local authorities sought excuses to eliminate prefabs, any one home with a fault meant a council would condemn an entire prefab estate.

The Swedish Timber homes were the only freehold prefabs, they survived to be privately owned, and have generally lasted well, notably in Guildford. Don’t be tempted to buy one. Building Societies and banks strongly resist lending on them, as the buildings can’t be surveyed in terms of more conventional homes.
The Liverpool estate was flattened in the mid-60s, but former residents still meet regularly. A similar outcome applies for the former Isle of Dogs estate.

‘House envy’ is still evident over prefabs – mostly “inverted snobbery” from people in conventional accommodation. Their better-built but much more ordinary homes lack the visual appeal and heritage of a prefab; conventional residents look down in many ways on prefab residents, but in many cases the prefabs may outlast the brick and steel of other buildings.

An unusual and entertaining evening – we thanked Jane in the usual way and may perhaps look on these strange, eccentric and lovable homes with different eyes from now on. Thanks, as usual to Collin for arranging this!

For those online, a website will remain after the Moving Museum finally closes – visit www.prefabmuseum.uk

**Afterword** – the Excalibur Estate, Britain’s largest surviving collection of post-war prefabs, originally 187 dwellings, will finally vanish (*apart from six prefabs listed by English Heritage, which will become ‘community buildings’*), according to the *Evening Standard* on 06 Dec. A new estate of 371 housing association properties will replace the classic prefabs, after a long battle with the unhearing Council, including presentations by the Twentieth Century Society, came to an unfortunate end after a ten-year battle.

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**LONDON’S DOCKLANDS**

Colin Oakes

London’s Docklands started in the old City within its walls until as late as 1795. After they moved to their new eastern situation they continued to have a City presence until the 1980’s. Docklands then kept growing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Docks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>West India Docks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1804-</td>
<td>East India Docks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>London Docks</td>
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<td>1807-1921</td>
<td>Surrey Docks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>St Katherine’s Dock</td>
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<td>1855</td>
<td>Victoria Docks</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>Millwall Docks</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>Albert Docks</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td>Tilbury Dock</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>King George V Docks</td>
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The rise, growth and fall of these docks and their subsequent rise again for a different use is a history of Industrial Archaeology. The talk looks at all this and more.

**Editor’s Note:** *This is a synopsis of the talk given by Colin at the BIAG meeting on 19 March and was kindly provided by him.*

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**BEYOND OUR BORDERS**

Bob Haskins

**Beyond Our Borders: Number 6 – Hazelhurst Aqueduct, Staffordshire**

Hazelhurst Aqueduct in Staffordshire (SJ954536) in the hamlet of Denford, approximately two and a half miles SE of the town of Leek (a forty-minute bus ride from Hanley bus station), takes the Leek Branch Canal over the Caldon Canal. The Caldon Canal is itself a branch of the Trent & Mersey Canal that runs 18 miles from Etruria (SJ870469) in Stoke-on-Trent.

The Caldon Canal was opened in 1779 with James Brindley (1716-1772) undertaking the original survey work and John Rennie (1761-1821) taking over on his untimely death. The Leek branch of the canal was opened in 1841 with John Rennie also as the engineer. It is brick built (now painted) with stone dressings.

It is a grade II listed building.
The Barton Swing Aqueduct that carries the Bridgewater Canal and the parallel Swing Road Bridge (B5211) are two important crossing points over the Irwell/Mersey valley between Manchester and Warrington. Both structures were brought into use with the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 and both are replacements to earlier crossings.

There has been a road crossing over the River Irwell at Barton (SJ766975) since the 17th century. A bridge was constructed over the river around 1677-79 replacing an earlier ford. This bridge was demolished during the Jacobite rising in 1745 and subsequently replaced by a wooden footbridge and later this was replaced by a three-arch road bridge. The current swing bridge you see today (Photograph 7.1) was built by Andrew Handyside and Company of Derby to the design of Sir Edward Leader Williams (1828-1910) and opened in 1894. It has a span of 195 ft and carries an 18ft roadway. It is a grade II listed building.
The adjacent Barton Swing Canal Aqueduct that can be seen today (photograph 7.2) replaced the original Barton Aqueduct built and designed by James Brindley (1716-1772) under the direction of John Gilbert (1724-1795) the land agent for the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (a.k.a. The Canal Duke). This was the first navigable aqueduct to be built in England and took the Bridgewater Canal from the Duke’s coal mines at Worsley, where there were over 45 miles of underground routes, over the River Irwell and on to the Castlefield area of Manchester. It is a Grade II* listed building.
The four-story brick tower standing on the 400ft x 30ft man-made island in the middle of the canal is the valve house (photographs 7.3a and b) that contain the controls for both bridges. The island supports the pivot points of both bridges and if you look carefully you’ll see a buffer for the road bridge in photograph 7.3a. The structure is four stories high, each of two bays and accessed by an external staircase. When the bridge is opened they jointly span the length of the island.

The waterway that you see in all images is the Manchester Ship Canal. It still serves the purpose it was built for, carrying traffic up to Pomona Docks in the centre of Manchester, and the two swing bridges still need to be opened, albeit less frequently. The Bridgewater canal no longer carries freight but has become a popular cruising route between the Rochdale and Aston Canals to the north east of Manchester, and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal to the west. The B5211 is still busy with car, bus and truck traffic between Stretford and Worsley.

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**FORTHCOMING 2018 MEETINGS PROGRAMME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 April 2018</td>
<td>Lawrence Cameron memorial slide show (to be followed by briefing on the SERIAC arrangements)</td>
<td>Bob Haskins/Peter Trout</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 May 2018</td>
<td>125 years of Raleigh Bicycles</td>
<td>Tony Hadland</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 September 2018</td>
<td>Didcot Railway Centre – its Past, Present and Future</td>
<td>Ann Middleton</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 October 2018</td>
<td>AGM + members’ presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 November 2018</td>
<td>Architectural Ceramics</td>
<td>David Tinkler</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 December 2018</td>
<td>Film Show &amp; Social Evening</td>
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All meetings are held on Monday evenings at the Church Hall of St Mary’s Church, Castle St, Reading RG1 7RD and start at 7.30pm. Access to the church hall is through the right-hand side passage.

**Travel Guidance:** By bus, St Mary’s Church Hall is within a two-minute walk from St Mary’s Butts and a five-minute walk from Oxford Road where many Reading Corporation buses stop.

By car, the Church does not have a car park, but vehicles may be parked off-road on the market stall hardstanding area in Hosier Street. Alternatively, there is a public car park in the Civic Centre adjacent to the Church. St Mary’s Church has a web site with a map: [http://www.cofec.org/stmarys.html](http://www.cofec.org/stmarys.html)

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

Unfortunately, we seem to have been resting for this issue! Thanks to Bent, I managed to find an article on Prefabs from “The Bulletin” that I thought complemented John McGuinness’ talk on concrete buildings nicely. However, that was pretty well all, do please keep the articles coming – the reservoir for the next issue is once again almost empty!
However, many thanks to Bob Haskins for his continuing “Beyond our Borders” series and here, there are more to come! The idea is to feature visits of IA interest to sites outside our immediate area and we are keen to encourage any other members who make similar trips to write them up, so they can be featured as well. Hopefully, with the winter now almost over (!!!) members will be able to get out more often.

John Coulson

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**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**SERIAC 2018 – Saturday 21 April 2018**

A reminder that SERIAC is being hosted by BIAG in Windsor. Please make a note in your diaries and keep the date free! The outline programme is as follows:

- Welcome & Housekeeping
- The Miles Aircraft Factory (Ken Fostekew)
- Illustrating Catalogues: Jabez Hare, Commercial Wood Engraver (Martin Andrews)
- Blotters, Board & Banknotes (Sheila Viner)
- Lunch
- The Hush-Hush Factory at Tubney Wood (Rosemary Kitto)
- Preservation of Public Road Transport in the Thames Valley (Colin Billington)
- The Slough Industrial Estate and its Railway (Jaye Isherwood)
- Closing Remarks and invitation to SERIAC 2019
- Site Visits
  - Thames Valley & Great Western Omnibus Trust
  - Windsor Walking Tour
  - Archive Transport Film Show

Further details from Graham Smith (Tel: 01635 580356, email: secretary@biag.org.uk)

**AIA Conference, University of Nottingham – Friday 31 August to Tuesday 4 September**

Please note this replaces the previously billed conference in Caithness from 22 to 27th June which is going ahead with a different sponsor.

The Nottingham conference will include visits to the only remaining bell foundry in the UK (Taylor’s of Loughborough), rotative beam engines at Leicester and Papplewick together with other local places of interest.

For further details, see [https://industrial-archaeology.org/conferences/annual-conference](https://industrial-archaeology.org/conferences/annual-conference). Note that the closing date for getting the early booking discount rate is Friday 11 May.

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**FORTHCOMING BIAG VISITS**

**British Motor Heritage Ltd, Witney and Combe Mill near Long Hanborough - Wednesday 20 June 2018**

The plan is to drive either individually or in shared cars to the British Motor Heritage Ltd (bhm-ltd.com) factory in Cotswold Business Park, Range Road, Witney OX29 0YB (entrance off Book End Road) to arrive for 10:30am.

British Motor Heritage Limited was established in 1975 to support owners and the marketplace by putting genuine components for classic British cars back into manufacture, using original tools wherever possible. Since 2001, when the company was acquired from BMW, it has been successfully run as an independent company.

The Company is the largest organization of its type in the world. With access to authentic production information and original drawings and patterns, it manufactures previously unobtainable body parts for British classic cars. It assembles 42 derivatives of body shells and has built total production volume of over 6000 for the MGB, MGR V8, MG Midget, Austin-Healey Sprite, Triumph TR6, Original Mini and Mini Clubman using original press tools and assembly jigs.

Please note:
- **Most Important** – The factory is not a suitable environment for anybody with a heart pacemaker due to the
strong electrical fields created by the welding equipment.

- For safety and insurance reasons, children (under 16) cannot be allowed into the factory.
- Eye protection needs to be worn – this is provided by BMH.
- There are stairs and steps which need to be negotiated, so please wear sensible footwear.
- We are limited to a maximum of 15 people for the tour. There are no restrictions on photography. There is no charge though you may donate to a local charity if you wish.

The factory tour will last approximately two hours, following which we will drive into the centre of Witney for a pub lunch at The Company of Weavers (a Wetherspoons establishment), or you may bring or purchase a picnic lunch. Parking in Witney is free.

After lunch we will drive to Combe Mill (www.combemill.co.uk) to arrive at about 2:00pm. Combe Mill is the original sawmill and workshop of the Blenheim Palace Estate. This working industrial museum offers visitors a good insight into what work was like in Victorian times on a rural estate. The Mill is operated as a working hands-on museum by the Combe Mill Society and run entirely by volunteers

Group admission is £4.00 per person. There is a café at the Mill – departure for home will be at about 4:30pm.

If the BMH Factory and/or Combe Mill don’t suit, subject to transport arrangements being agreed, other options include:

- Witney and District Museum (westoxfordshiremuseum.co.uk) open 10am to 4pm, admission £2.00.
- Cogges Manor Farm, Cogges, Witney (cogges.org.uk) open 10am to 5pm, admission £6.50.
- Oxford Bus Museum and Morris Motors Museum, Hanborough Station, Long Hanborough (oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk), admission £5.00.

Please contact Graham Smith 01635 580356 or secretary@biag.org.uk to register your interest by 13th June.

Excursion to Tewkesbury – Saturday 11 August 2018

A day excursion to Tewkesbury with opportunities for a guided walk around the town and its environs, a pub lunch at a local hostelry, followed by an afternoon guided walk looking at the rivers Severn and Avon and an excursion to view Mythe Bridge before leaving for an evening meal and social at The Crown Inn in Kemerton.

The plan is to drive either individually or in shared cars down to the long-term car park in Church Street, Tewkesbury to receive a brief and relevant hand-out material. It is then proposed we follow a guided walk around the town, stopping for a pub lunch, followed by an afternoon stroll down the rivers River Severn and Avon to view Mythe Bridge (designed by Telford). Individuals may if they wish plan their own day on what they wish to see and for how long they take at each site. Either way, we can meet for lunch, but should depart late afternoon for Kemerton for an evening meal and social in the Crown Inn before our departure home. The provisional itinerary:

- 08.30 Depart Reading/Newbury for the long-term car park in Church Street, Tewkesbury (SO888322).
- 10.00 Arrive Park & Ride (the all-day fee is £3.20) to receive a brief, local brochures and literature.
• 10.15 Guided Walk Part I
• 13.00 Pub lunch break at the Tudor House Hotel
• 14.30 Guided Walk Part II
• 18.00 Return to the long-stay car park for departure to Kemerton (GL20 7HP).
• 18.30 Social and evening meal in The Crown Inn, Kemerton.
• 20.30 Depart for home.

Tewkesbury Abbey: http://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.uk/
Tewkesbury Information Centre: http://www.visittewkesbury.info/
The Crown Inn: http://thecrownkemerton.co.uk/

Please contact Bob Haskins if you are interested contact@biag.org.uk

FORTHCOMING GLIAS EVENTS

The Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society (GLIAS) have now kindly agreed to include details of BIAG events in their Diary so, in future, we will also include details of their planned events:

Walks:

A series of free guided walks, looking at the industrial and social heritage of different areas of London. To reserve places on any of the walks, please email walks@glias.org.uk to get details of the meeting points. Anyone without email can apply by post to the secretary. There are only a limited number of places available on each walk. The walks all start at 2.30pm. Non-members are welcome.

• Saturday 2nd June ALL CHANGE AT EUSTON, led by Mike and Kate Quinton
• Saturday 7th July DEPTFORD, led by Peter Finch
• Saturday 4th August MILE END, led by Martin Adams
• Saturday 1st September OLD OAK / PARK ROYAL, led by John Goodier
• Saturday 6th October LONDON BRIDGE / BERMONDESEY, led by Pat Dennison

Lectures:

GLIAS regular lectures will be held at 6.30pm in the Gallery, Alan Baxter Ltd, 75 Cowcross Street, EC1M 6EL. The Gallery is through the archway and in the basement at the rear of the building. There is a lift from the main entrance.

• 16 May Wed A G M (6.15pm) + THE POST OFFICE MUSEUM AND RAILWAY, by Chris Taft

For general BIAG business, please contact the Secretary: GRAHAM SMITH (Tel: 01635-580356)
114 SHAW ROAD, NEWBURY, BERKS, RG14 1HR or email secretary@biag.org.uk

Submissions to BIAG News are welcome in any format. Please send your contributions with an IA theme such as articles, letters, pictures, jokes, cartoons, cuttings from journals etc. to:

JOHN COULSON (Tel: 0118 9402526)
3 THE CRESCENT, CRAZIES HILL, READING, RG10 8LW
or e-mail newsletter@biag.org.uk (please note new e-mail address)